

In the Claims:

1 (Currently Amended). A method of increasing the capacity for secretory protein synthesis in a plant, comprising ~~causing a plant to maintain~~ maintaining in at least a part of ~~the a~~ plant, a level of luminal binding protein (BiP), or a homologue thereof, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is greater than the endogenous level of BiP or homologue thereof for said plant in non-stressful conditions.

2 (Currently Amended). A method ~~of reducing according to claim 1, whereby~~ the period of time within ~~which the a~~ plant's natural defense mechanism to responds to an attack by a plant pathogen ~~is reduced by increasing the capacity for secretory protein synthesis in a plant comprising maintaining in at least a part of the plant a level of BiP, or a homologue thereof, which is greater than the endogenous level for said plant in non-stressful conditions.~~

3 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, wherein the level of BiP, or a homologue thereof, is at least three times said endogenous level of BiP or homologue thereof.

4 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 3, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is at least five times said endogenous level of BiP or homologue thereof.

5 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is effected by overexpressing BiP, or a homologue thereof, by means of a chimeric gene ~~containing~~ comprising a strong constitutive promoter, a coding region for BiP or a homologue thereof, and a 3' untranslated ~~end region containing~~ comprising a stop sequence codon.

6 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is effected by overexpressing calreticulin, or a homologue thereof, by means of a chimeric gene ~~containing~~ comprising a strong constitutive promoter, a coding region for calreticulin or a homologue thereof and a 3' untranslated ~~end region containing~~ comprising a stop sequence codon.

7 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is effected by overexpressing (1) the ATPase domain of BiP, or a homologue thereof, and (2) an endoplasmic reticulum (ER) retention signal by means of a chimeric gene ~~containing~~ comprising a strong constitutive promoter, a coding region for the ATPase domain of BiP, or a homologue thereof, a coding region for an ER retention signal and a 3' untranslated ~~end region containing comprising~~ a stop ~~sequence~~ codon.

8 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, wherein said level of BiP or homologue thereof is effected by modifying at least one signal transduction pathway leading to BiP induction.

9 (Currently Amended). A The method according to claim 1, further comprising treating the plant with salicylic acid.

10. (Original) A modified plant which maintains, in at least a part thereof, a level of BiP, or a homologue thereof, of at least a three times greater than the level maintained in said part by an unmodified plant of the same species in non-stressful conditions.

11 (Currently Amended). A The modified plant according to claim 10, wherein the level of BiP, or a homologue thereof, is at least five times greater than the level maintained by an unmodified plant of the same species in non-stressful conditions.

12. - 13. (Cancelled)

14 (Currently Amended). A The modified plant or plant cells according to claim 15, wherein the level of BiP or a homologue thereof is at least five times greater than the endogenous level of BiP or a homologue thereof of the plant or plant cells in non-stressful conditions.

15. (Previously Presented). A modified plant or plant cell having a level of BiP, or a homologue thereof, which is at least three times greater than the endogenous level of the plant or plant cells, whereby said modified plant or plant cell is produced by the method of Claim 1.

16. (Currently Amended). A method of protecting a plant against pathogen attack by overexpressing BiP or a homologue thereof in combination with administering salicylic acid to said plant in an amount sufficient to accelerate the induction of PR gene conversion to protect the plant against said pathogen attack.